

The Murders of Crispus and Fausta 245

secret. One circumstance, however, mentioned by Aurelius Victor and by Zosimus, merits attention. Both declare that the Empress-mother, Helena, was furious at the murder of Crispus. Zosimus says that she was greatly distressed at her grandson's suffering, and could hardly contain herself at the news of his death (^{^cry^rws¹} rijv aralpsc^{fiv} rov vlov tpspovffT/z). Aurelius Victor adds that the aged Empress bitterly reproached her son for his cruelty (*Cum cum mater Helena nimio dolor? ncpotis increparef*). Evidently, Helena favoured Crispus, the son of Minervina—who, like herself, had been forced by the exigencies of State to quit her husband's house, and make room for an Emperor's daughter—in preference to the children, of Constantino and Fausta; evidently therefore, Helena and Fausta were rival influences at court, each striving for ascendancy. If Crispus's death betokened that Fausta had gained the upper hand, the death of Fausta shewed that Helena had succeeded in turning the tables. When Helena violently reproached her son for slaying Crispus, we may be sure that she was aiming her shafts through Constantine at Fausta, and that when she succeeded in rousing the Emperor to remorse she succeeded also in kindling his resentment against his wife. It is said that Fausta was suffocated in a hot bath, but every detail is open to challenge. Eusebius passes over the entire episode without a word. He is not only silent as to the death of Fausta but also as to the death of Crispus* The courtly Bishop refuses to turn even a single look towards the crime-stained Palatine, on